

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An image forming apparatus for making gray-scale images by performing at least one operation selected from the group consisting of: a manipulation of a plurality of dots arranged in matrix form, a single-dot-based density adjustment, and a single-dot-based size adjustment, said image forming apparatus comprising:

a dot status detector configured to detect an occurrence in which a dot exists at a focus dot position and no dot exists at positions immediately adjacent to the focus dot position in the main scanning direction; and

a density adjuster configured to ~~adjust~~ convert a writing level of the dot at the focus dot position ~~to make a smooth gray-scale transition to a first value~~ when the dot status detector detects the occurrence and to convert the writing level of the dot at the focus dot position to a second value, different from the first value, when the dot status detector does not detect the occurrence.

Claim 2 (Original): The image forming apparatus as defined in Claim 1, further comprising:

a dot phase adjuster configured to expand the dot in a direction right of a center of the dot when the dot status detector detects the occurrence and configured to expand the dot in a direction left of the center of the dot when the dot status detector does not detect the occurrence.

Claim 3-6 (Canceled)

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): An image forming apparatus for making gray-scale images by performing at least one operation selected from the group consisting of: a manipulation of a plurality of dots arranged in matrix form, a single-dot-based density adjustment, and a single-dot-based size adjustment, said image forming apparatus comprising:

dot status detecting means for detecting an occurrence in which a dot exists at a focus dot position and no dot exists at positions immediately adjacent the focus dot position in the main scanning direction; and

density adjusting means for ~~adjusting~~ converting a writing level of the dot at the focus dot position ~~to make a smooth gray-scale transition to a first value~~ when the dot status detecting means detects the occurrence and for converting the writing level of the dot at the focus dot position to a second value, different from the first value, when the dot status detecting means does not detect the occurrence.

Claim 8 (Original): The image forming apparatus as defined in Claim 7, further comprising:

dot phase adjusting means for expanding the dot in a direction right of a center of the dot when the dot status detecting means detects the occurrence and for expanding the dot in a direction left of the center of dot when the dot status detecting means does not detect the occurrence.

Claim 9-12 (Canceled)

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A method for forming gray-scale images by performing at least one operation selected from the group consisting of: a manipulation of a

plurality of dots arranged in matrix form, a single-dot-based density adjustment, and a single-dot-based size adjustment, said method comprising the steps of:

detecting whether an occurrence exists in which a dot exists at a focus dot position and no dot exists at positions immediately adjacent the focus dot position in the main scanning direction; ~~and~~

~~adjusting~~ converting a writing level of the dot at the focus dot position to make a smooth gray-scale transition to a first level when the detecting step detects the occurrence; and

converting the writing level of the dot at the focus dot position to a second value, different from the first value, when the detecting step does not detect the occurrence.

Claim 14 (Original): The method as defined in Claim 13, further comprising the step of:

expanding the dot in a direction right of a center of the dot when the detecting step detects the occurrence, and expanding the dot in a direction left of the center of the dot when the detecting step does not detect the occurrence.

Claim 15-18 (Canceled)